

# GREAT VALLEY NEWS

## Farms and the Environment

Farmers, say some, are the original defenders of the soil and of the natural environment - true stewards of the land. After all, they and their families live with nature.

But others blame farmers for widespread loss of habitat in the Central Valley due primarily to draining wetlands and cutting riverside trees and brush, and hold farmers responsible for destructive practices and for pollution of air and water.

The debate continues. While an argument can be made both ways, as has been true in California for decades, there is evidence that farmers are doing a great deal for the environment, that many are sympathetic to the role of biodiversity and go out of their way to preserve habitat, use their chemicals wisely and sparingly, and do their best to keep the air and water clean.

The ideal, of course, is to farm productively while conserving the natural environment. Thus it is encouraging to learn from the news and from agricultural and environmental organizations that many farmers are able to grow food and fiber and also manage and care for wild areas.

Promoting dual benefit is the Natural Resource Conservation Service, a federal agency that has offices throughout the Valley to help farmers help themselves in living with and observing environmental laws.

For example, handling floodwater is a concern of all landowners near rivers. As noted in an op/ed essay in *The Modesto Bee* by Tim Ramirez (Dec. 8, 1998), "Many landowners along the (Tuolumne) River

have already taken the initiative, with the assistance of the local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, to create an expanded floodway that makes sense for the river and private property owners. Landowners along the river have applied for easements on parts of their land, which allow for seasonal flooding, restoration of riparian habitats, and (to) keep the land in private hands. This is the kind of local lead-

California's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, makes the statement, "Increasingly, agricultural and environmental issues are intertwined and inextricable."

Gomes continues, "Just as a healthy ecosystem is vital to agriculture, agriculture can provide a haven for wildlife, by forming a buffer between natural habitat and urban development. Development not only consumes wildlife habitat, it fragments what is



**FARMERS ATTEND the Nature Conservancy Riparian Restoration Tour held recently at Woodbridge Wildlife Refuge.**

ership that makes a difference."

A number of examples of farmers engaged in environmental protection are found in the May-June 1999 issue of *California Agriculture* magazine. W. R. Gomes, vice president, Agriculture and Natural Resources of the University of

left, creating islands of space too small to support healthy populations of mammals and migratory birds. Farms and ranches can provide feeding, breeding and wintering areas, as well as stopovers for migrating birds."

**FARMS: continued on Page FIVE**



*A Great Valley Center Publication*



**VOL. 2, NO. 3**

**The Great Valley Center Staff**

- Carol Whiteside**, *President*
- Denny Marshall**, *Director of Finance*
- Heidi Arno**, *Director of Administration*
- Sheila Hurst**, *Community Projects Coordinator*
- Holly King**, *Agricultural Programs Manager*
- Larry Lloyd**, *North Valley Field Rep*
- Tapan Munroe**, *Consulting Economist*
- Michelle DiGuilio**, *Programs Assistant*
- Doug Jackson**, *Programs Assistant*

Great Valley News is published by the Great Valley Center.

Editor: Larry McSwain  
 Production Design: Mark Looker  
 Printing: Mattos Newspapers, Inc.

Contact the Great Valley Center by mail, fax, phone or email:

Great Valley Center, 911 13th Street, Modesto, CA 95354; Phone (209) 522-5103; Fax (209) 522-5116; info@greatvalley.org

**With thoughts turning towards end-of-the-year giving, the Great Valley Center welcomes contributions from those interested in supporting its mission. Your gift will help us make the Valley a better place to live. Your support is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE  
**Great Valley News**

THINKING STRATEGICALLY



CAROL WHITESIDE

Government revenues at every level - federal, state and local - are up, benefiting from the sustained economic boom. One of the Valley's cities was bragging about its commitment to fixing potholes with the new revenue-a worthy cause, and one we can all appreciate. But fixing potholes is a short-term activity. If all we do is fix potholes, five years from now we won't have done much to improve the overall well being of our communities. We need to get beyond the pothole mentality and begin to think strategically about the Central Valley.

According to my former Army Major husband, "A strategy is a long-term plan." Successful cities like Cleveland, (now booming after recovering from industrial pollution that caused the burning of the Cuyahoga River) and Indianapolis (once an economic wasteland, and now the home of the NCAA and dozens of other athletic organizations), or Pacific Rim leaders like Hong Kong and Shanghai, created strategic visions for their own success and then committed resources and energy over several years to help them reach their goals.

There are no quick fixes for the systemic poverty and unemployment that grips too many places in the Central Valley. As a region, we need a strategy for the new century-a long-term plan that directs investment and builds toward shared prosperity and a good quality of life throughout the region. The State's commitment to UC Merced is a strategic investment - a decision made now that will provide enormous benefit to the region over time, attracting researchers and new technologies, turning more higher education graduates back into the area, and adding to the intellectual capital that is vital to any successful region.

Our region needs a strategic vision-one that builds on the enormously rich agricultural base that already supports us economically and provides food and fiber to the world, a vision that includes healthy cities, transportation systems and uses technology to link us to the rest of the global economy.

We need to encourage leaders - business leaders, government leaders and community activists - to move beyond potholes and develop a strategic plan for the region to ensure that the Central Valley will be one of the great success stories in 2020.

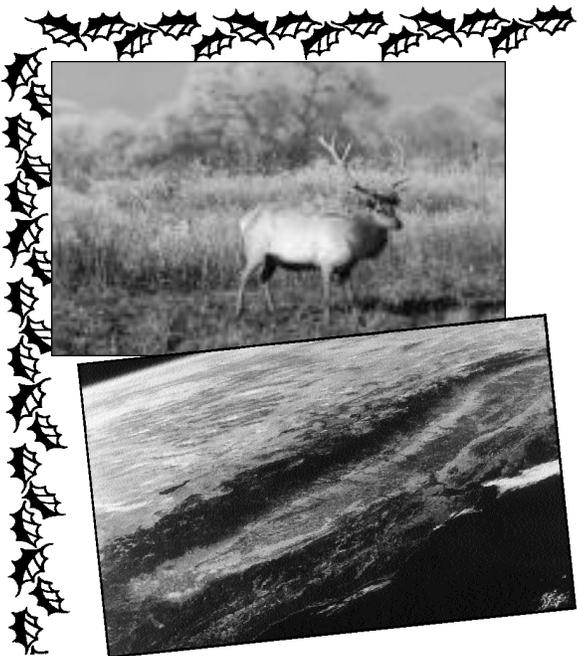
**An Unusual Holiday Gift**

Just in time for the holidays, the Great Valley Center is offering unique notecards for people who want to honor the Great Central Valley of California.

One is the magnificent photo of the Great Central Valley from space, a NASA photo that shows the full extent of the region and the West with the Valley at the center, from Shasta to Kern, with the Pacific in the foreground. Beyond the Sierra Nevada range can be seen the state of Nevada and points on east, to the curvature of Earth.

The second card is one of the most unusual Valley scenes in nature, a photo taken by wildlife photographer and biologist Gary Zahm of a Tule Elk on a winter morning in the Valley with the air so cold that the trees and brush are coated with ice.

Both shots are full color, sized 5 x 7 with lots of space for writing your own message. We welcome your order for the price of \$14.50 for a box of 10, which includes envelopes, postage and handling. Please make your check payable to Great Valley Center and post it to us right away. Specify Satellite View, Tule Elk or Assortment (5 each) when ordering.



# People Are Moving Into the Inland Valleys

People are on the move these days. While the major migrations from state to state have been in the East and the South, there was plenty of it during this decade in the San Joaquin Valley.

Nearly 140,000 Bay Area people have moved to Stanislaus, San Joaquin and Merced counties this decade, according to Internal Revenue Service statistics released in September. Most of the newcomers were from metropolitan Alameda and Santa Clara Counties.

There was, at the same time, movement the other way, from the Valley to the Bay Region. The net increase to the Valley from Bay counties was nearly 55,000 people. Economics seems to have been the root cause - the considerably less-costly housing in Central Valley communities. The possibility seems to exist, also, that some of the migrants were seeing a simpler lifestyle, as was true of another migration noted, from Valley counties east to the foothills, along the Sierra Nevada range, and the historic Mother Lode.

In-migration from the Bay Area has created a phenomenon: Thousands of commuter cars going back and forth from their new Valley homes to the old jobs in the coastal region, a commute that



**COMMUTERS HEADING home on the Altamont.**

can consume three or more hours per day. Another result of the migration is added pressure on the still mostly rural Valley counties to provide even more housing and urban amenities, and the continuing decline of the region's air quality.

## Calendar of Events . . .

- ❑ Applications for the Institute for the Development of Emerging Area Leaders (IDEAL) Program are due November 22, 1999.
- ❑ LEGACI Grant Application forms are available November 15, 1999. Applications are due at the Great Valley Center on January 31, 2000.
- ❑ San Joaquin Valley Water Coalition Plenary Session, January, 2000 (date and location to be determined).
- ❑ Great Valley Conference, Sacramento, May 10 & 11, 2000.
- ❑ Dates for public displays of the Housing the Next 10 Million traveling exhibit are posted on the American Institute of Architects California Council's web site, [www.aiacc.org](http://www.aiacc.org).

**Check our web site, [www.greatvalley.org](http://www.greatvalley.org), for application forms and other announcements.**

## Agri-Tech Forum Held

Work is under way, under the auspices of the Great Valley Center, to position farmers and food processors of the San Joaquin Valley for the opportunities of this fast-changing time.

The New Valley Connexions Ag Tech Forum was held November 3 in Modesto and centered on a review of two reports: Marketplace Dynamics Affecting Agri-food Products and Technology for Sustainable Agriculture. The purpose was to develop self-sustaining strategies for capitalizing on new technologies to enhance competitive advantage. The Forum, co-sponsored by Ag Leadership, identified strategies in a consumer driven food system, and also looked at new technologies for solving environmental problems. For more information, contact Sheila Hurst at the Great Valley Center or Kerry Tucker at Nuffer Smith Tucker at 619-296-0605, or check the New Valley Connexions web site at <http://www.greatvalley.org/nvc/>

## Land Trusts Convene At Workshop

According to the report entitled "The State of the Great Central Valley," (Great Valley Center publication 7/99) in spite of the importance of agriculture to the region, there is relatively little agricultural conservation in the region. To begin to improve that situation, seventeen land trusts from various parts of the Central Valley attended a retreat held in Coalinga Oct. 29 and 30 hosted by the Great Valley Center.

More than 60 participants, mainly board members and directors of the various land trusts from across the Central Valley, representing counties from Tulare to Shasta, learned

about legal issues, strategic planning, budgeting and board development. "This workshop gave us some great tools. Our land trust is preparing to take on new transactions with the coming of the new UC Campus," said Linda Macedo of the Merced Land Trust.

Among the speakers were Chris Herrman of Land Trust Alliance; Steve Johnson of the Nature Conservancy, Robert Berner of Marin Agricultural Land Trust, and Will Murray of Conservation Impact. With workshops and networking, local land conservation efforts will grow stronger.

# New Valley Connexions Conference Sparks Ideas...

Economic innovation requires social innovation, collaboration and connection.

- ◆ Innovation is place-based. Know how and collaboration are elements that combine in successful regions.
- ◆ Agriculture is part of the new economy.
- ◆ If you don't keep up, you will be left behind.
- ◆ In the global economy, there are no borders.
- ◆ A culture of blame is a sure recipe for failure because nothing is accomplished.
- ◆ If you are not on the Net, you are nowhere.
- ◆ Place matters when people have choices.
- ◆ It's not about computing, it's about communicating.
- ◆ If you have the skills, ethnicity doesn't matter.
- ◆ There are opportunities. The question is, can we rise to the challenge?

These were the messages of the New Valley Connexions conference, held in Visalia in September. Co-sponsored by the Great Valley Center and the Office of Strategic Technology, part of the State's Trade and Commerce Agency, the two-day meeting drew participation from the eight counties of the San Joaquin Valley.

Attendees were challenged and encouraged to hear about emerging technology-related clusters in the region and the opportunity for the Valley to become more globally competitive in the



**San Joaquin Valley Technology Conference attendees listen attentively to a speaker.**

new economy. They were also sobered to hear about the educational requirements for full participation in the new economy.

There are opportunities. The question is, can we rise to the challenge?

For more information about New Valley Connexions, contact Sheila Hurst at the Great Valley Center, 209-522-5103 or [sheila@greatvalley.org](mailto:sheila@greatvalley.org).

## Farm Water Video Is Excellent Tool For Advancing Understanding

A new video that helps people understand the complicated issues of agricultural water in California has been produced by the California Farm Water Coalition. Partially funded by a grant from the Great Valley Center, and called "Farm Water Works!" the 14-minute film is an excellent tool for advancing understanding.

The video covers the history of irrigated farming in the state, beginning with the Gold Rush. Methods of irrigation are

explored, as are the efforts by farmers to make every drop of water count. Priced at \$10 per copy, the video can be ordered from California Farm Water Coalition by phone at (916) 441-7723 or by writing to CFWC at 717 K Street, Suite 505, Sacramento 95184.

The coalition is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to educating consumers.

## Farms: continued from Page ONE

Farmers are using a number of management practices, such as delaying the harvest of hay and some other crops, to benefit marshland birds, allowing hedgerows to grow between fields, protecting the remnant Valley Oaks on their land, and so on.

In the Sacramento Valley, 18 farm owners are working with the California Waterfowl Association in building brood ponds for waterfowl.

Dairy land owned by Joseph Gallo Farms is located alongside the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Merced County, a very critical area. Gallo Farms recently sold the development rights to 2,000 acres along the heart of the wetlands to the Fish & Wildlife Service. The firm also is restoring wetlands on its property and integrating them with pastureland.

The California Farm Bureau publication, *Ag Alert*, in its Aug. 4, 1999 issue tells about rancher John Ohm of Red Bluff and his welcome arms approach to wildlife. Birds and deer are encouraged. "All of the actions Ohm takes to promote wildlife on his property are

completely voluntary," says the story. "He says that "most people in agriculture...do a lot of voluntary stuff and don't even think about (it)."

Some farm owners are taking part in a new method of flood control in which levees are pierced to allow flooding streams to spread into their natural plains. This slows the river flow and makes it less destructive not only to nearby farms but for all areas near rivers. Also it is very good for biodiversity.

Most farmers are conscientious about their role with the environment, is the view of Michael A. McElhiney, the USDA district conservationist in Stanislaus County. "Most farmers and their families live there and are members of the community. They are having to respond more and more. They want to do the right thing, and the great majority already are. A few, by their actions, bring discredit on the rest."

Much, of course, remains to be done. California's air and water are far from clean. Habitat continues to diminish. Floods take an annual toll. Agricultural practices that support a healthy environment and productive farming are the imperative of the future.

# Housing the Next 10 Million

## *Traveling Exhibit Update*

Communities throughout the Central Valley are preparing to host exhibitions, workshops and community receptions around winning design ideas from the competition among architects called the Housing the Next 10 Million Interdisciplinary Design Competition.

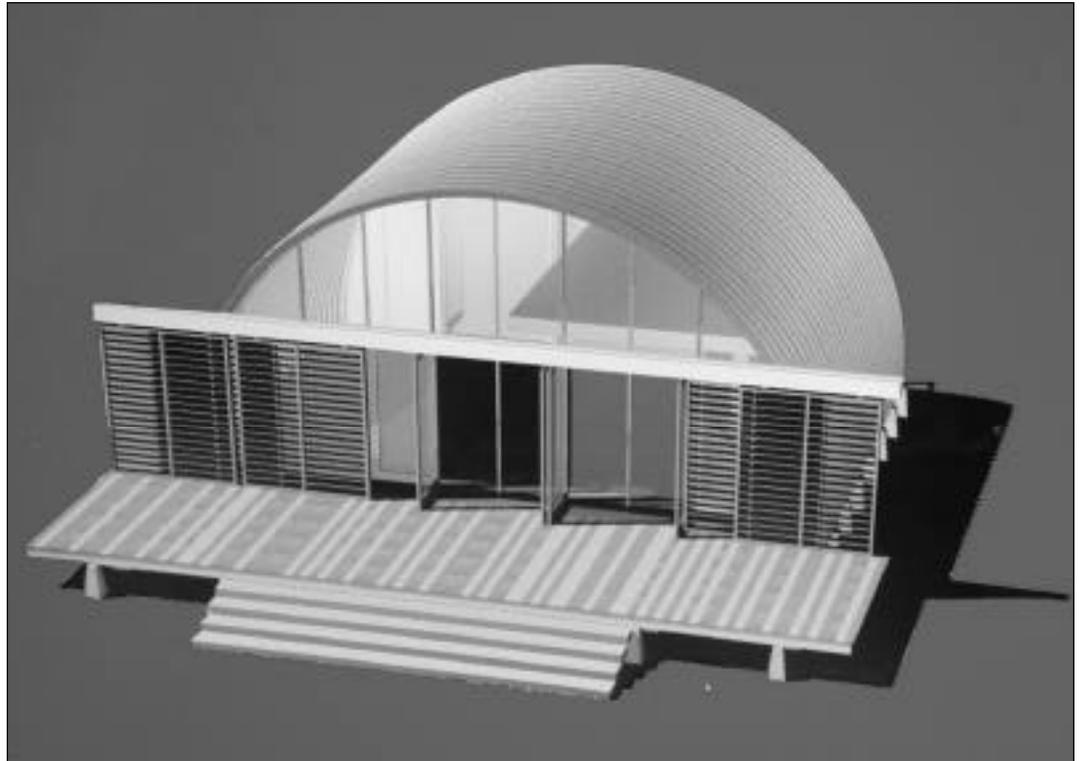
Entries have already been displayed in Tulare and Kern Counties, and the concepts were shown at a conference of the American Planning Association's California Chapter in Bakersfield.

Sponsored by the Great Valley Center and the American Institute of Architects California Council, the competition explored highly creative ideas for meeting the Central Valley's growing housing needs, endeavoring at the same time to protect valuable resources. The exhibition tour features the winning entries and others the jury panel found enlightening. Winners were chosen in the five categories: Infill Sites, Redevelopment, New Growth Areas, Small Rural Agricultural Communities, and Housing Design.

In the Infill category, an entry by Stephen Wheeler and Michael Larice of Berkeley won top honors for maximizing development of vacant lots by filling them in with a variety of housing types, meeting the needs of large and small families as well as individuals. The plan emphasizes walkable neighborhoods that includes shops. Developing on vacant land in cities spares agricultural land and helps to revitalize an area.

Blackbird Architects of Santa Barbara won in the Redevelopment category for their proposal for a specific site in Bakersfield. Incorporating walking paths, open space and a variety of housing types, the designers successfully rethought the current land use. At the heart of the project is a new wetland. The proposal makes the point that existing urban space can be changed in response to the needs of a changing population.

Russ Naylor of San Francisco led a team in creation of the winning Small Rural Agricultural Community entry. The Q-house, a temporary housing solution, rests lightly on the land, preserving the land while flexibly serving emergency housing needs. The modular kit of parts can be used in various combinations to create single-family housing, dormitory-style housing, community centers and medical centers.



**“The Q-House” provides temporary housing on agricultural land with minimal impact on the underlying soil.**

The competition acknowledged that some agricultural land in the Valley would have to be given up to development. The New Growth Area entrants addressed ways to do that thoughtfully and efficiently. In his award-winning solution for New Growth Areas, Daniel Parolek of Berkeley proposed creation of urban villages. By using design principles to create a strong sense of place, the designer presents a walkable community distinct from agricultural land. By creating an area of concentrated activity, Parolek proposes more efficient development of land than is usual.

Peter Junior, a design team from Chicago, Illinois, won in the Housing Design category for a proposal of simple, efficient and affordable housing. While this category focused on housing technology, the winners demonstrated that technological details of planning for growth must respond to the environment and regional conditions of the Central Valley.

The tour will continue northward until the May 2000 finale in Redding. In the final phase of the project, which will occur next fall, the sponsors will award up to four communities with funding for implementing plans that capture the spirit of the Ideas Competition. According to Carol Whiteside, GVC President, “There is no lack of good designs or plans for more efficient development. However, the real success of the competition will occur when we see new ideas for livable spaces actually under construction throughout the Valley.”

# Around the Valley...

◆ **State Treasurer Phil Angelides**, who formerly was a land developer, spoke Sept. 10 to Santa Clara County's Housing Leadership Council, his speech the basis for a column in the San Francisco Chronicle by Mark Simon entitled "How the '90s Boom Ruined Peninsula; Regional Planning might save what's left."

"We need to be in the business of rewarding communities that grow in an environmentally responsible way, addressing jobs and housing imbalances and building affordable housing," Angelides was quoted as saying. He wants to set standards for receiving state incentives based on criteria that include in-fill housing and high-density housing linked to the availability of transportation.

Commented Simon, the columnist, "What is needed is a fundamental change in how we think about how we use land, where and how we build housing, how we allow employment growth, and, most importantly, how we govern those things."

(San Francisco Chronicle, Sept. 14, 1999.)

◆ In late summer, the **Sacramento Area Council of Governments** issued a press release urging residents in the region to limit their outdoor activities and to avoid driving, as a way of coping with poor air quality. "By reducing the number of miles traveled and number of trips driven, the air quality level would benefit. The easiest solution to reducing driving is to carpool or vanpool for work or school trips," said the release. Later, the Council in its Regional Report, announced bare compliance with the Clean Air Act and warned, "Failure to achieve conformity in the future could cause the region to lose access to federal transportation dollars."

◆ By the year 2022, the six-county region of **El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba Counties** is projected to add 399,214 housing units (up 57.6 percent), 993,687 people (up 56.9 per-

cent) and 518,947 jobs (up 70.5 percent), according to a statistical publication for Sacramento Area Council of Governments in July.

◆ Neighboring cities in two counties are working together to establish a permanent green belt between them, one not subject to modification in the future. **Reedley**, in Tulare County, and **Dinuba**, in Fresno County are now fast growing into one another, something neither city desires for fear of loss of identity and possible conflicts in land use. A permanent green belt will serve to protect agricultural land.

(The Reedley Exponent, July 22, 1999.)

◆ Also in **Fresno County**, the unified school districts of Clovis and Fresno have together established a Center for Advanced Research and Technology where 11th and 12th grade students, as well as community college students and adults, attend half-day classes to gain knowledge needed for technical jobs or as preparation for post-secondary education. The 58,000 square-foot facility is the product of a joint -powers agreement.

◆ **Stanislaus County and the City of Modesto** have accomplished something not yet attempted anywhere else in California-the joint development of a downtown center for local governments that traditionally remain at arm's length. Tenth Street Place was dedicated in late October.

Among the objectives was to save taxpayer money by unifying many functions, to provide better services to taxpayers, and to foster economic development by streamlining permitting procedures. Sharing of staff functions, it is hoped, will lead to new avenues of cooperation. The Board of Supervisors and the City Council are sharing the formal meeting Chambers, though each will have separate suites of offices.

City and county government staffs will move into the impressive and large structure early in November.

Great Valley Center  
911 13th Street  
Modesto, CA 95354



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 18  
Modesto, CA